



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	North Bald Mountain (NBM) Community Assistance Grant (CAG) Fuels Reduction Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	Approximately 2 miles southeast of Columbia Big Hill/Hatler Mill 38° 02.521/120° 20.821 and Covington Road/North Bald Mountain Rd 38° 01.20 2/120° 21.412 The Legal Description is Portions of Sections 8, 17 and 18, T2N, R15E, MDB&M	COUNTY	Tuolumne
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT ADDRESS	Barry Rudolph, Battalion Chief, 18464 Striker Court, Sonora, CA 95370	PHONE	(209) 532-7424

Project Description: The NBM CAG Fuels Reduction Project is sponsored by CAL FIRE and the Highway 108 Fire Safe Council. The project area lies about 2 miles southeast of the town of Columbia, CA. Fuel reduction treatment will use North Bald Mountain Road as an approximate centerline; traveling north from the former Hatler Mill site through Telegraph Hill, a communications infrastructure site; and, continuing south to the intersection with Covington Mine Road. The project planning area encompasses approximately 500 acres. A combination of machine mastication and handwork with pile & burn will be implemented. Wildland fuels are primarily oak woodland with brush understory and mixed conifer overstory. Single family dwellings are interspersed throughout the project area along this ridgeline road system to form a "structure environment" defined as "Intermix."

Fuel reduction work will be performed by (1) hand crews using chain saws and other appropriate hand tools, (2) by mastication, (3) hand crews will cut and either burn or chip the trees less than 10" in diameter at breast height and brush within the treatment area. Trees may be designated for retention by project-parcel landowners. Trees will be pruned flush along 10' of bole bottoms or 1/3 of total crown, whichever is less. Any material that is masticated or chipped rather than piled and burned will be scattered on site to reduce vegetative resprouting.

+EXEMPTION STATUS

- ☒ Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class *15304- Minor Alterations to Land*
☐ Statutory Exemption (state code section):
☐ Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
☐ Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
☐ Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT: This project fits under portions of 15304- Minor Alterations to Land. Biological Resources were evaluated via the Natural Diversity Database. Riparian vegetation will not be altered as a result of project implementation. An archeological resources investigation was reviewed by a CAL FIRE professional Archeologist for the project; in the CAG project area; resources will be protected via avoidance. The operational area was configured to avoid potential impacts to wildlife & wildlife habitat as with like avoidance measures for archaeological resources; therefore the project is exempt. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at the CAL FIRE Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit Headquarters in San Andreas.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING


William E. Snyder, Deputy Director Date *5/20/13*
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

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